

Health & Safety Management Plan

Appendix B –Specific Policies and Procedures

1. Police Vetting Policy

Policy statement

We are committed to ensuring the safety of all in our care from the inappropriate conduct of others in ministry or leadership positions. To this end, all those to whom this policy applies must receive a satisfactory police vetting before appointment or commissioning.

Purpose

The Diocese of Nelson seeks to create a safe environment for people of all ages, whether they are church members or receive ministry from the church. In particular, the Diocese seeks to ensure that all relevant information about those holding office or ministering in the church is disclosed, so that no appointment is made of those whose ministry practice is likely to be unsafe.

We acknowledge that some behaviours can be repented of and need not affect appointment to ministry if the repentance is profound and lasting. However, extra care must be taken where there is a risk of sexual abuse and some behaviours can never safely be presumed to be a thing of the past.

Scope

This policy applies to all people (clergy and lay) aged over 18 years

- appointed to or formally seeking appointment to licenced ministry positions;
- formally seeking a contractual position involving direct interface with the public;
- involved in ministry to children, youth and the elderly in an acknowledged parish based ministry.

Process

1. All applicants for such positions must provide to the Executive Secretary a signed “Vetting Service Request and Consent Form” (available on the diocesan website) as part of the application process. The Request and Consent form should be provided as early in the appointment process as possible to allow time for processing by the Vetting Service.
2. The Diocese of Nelson is the Vetting Service Approved Agency and the vicar of each parish or mission unit is the Approved Agency Authorised Representative. In the absence of the vicar, forms should be signed by the Executive Secretary. Proof of identity is required in all cases.
3. On receiving the results of the police vet, the Executive Secretary shall advise the person in charge of the appointment process whether the appointment can proceed. If the vet raises questions, the Executive Secretary shall assess whether the disclosed information is relevant to the position sought and discuss this with the person in charge of appointment. Any necessary caveats shall be advised by the Executive Secretary, who shall keep a record of his/her advice.

The Executive Secretary will not disclose details of the vet to any staff other than the person in charge of appointment and the subject of the vet.

4. As a general rule, police vetting is required at least every five (5) years. Where the Vulnerable Children's Act applies, police vetting shall be required at least every three (3) years.
5. The following procedure applies to all positions decided at parish level:
 - All applications must include a signed "Vetting Service Request and Consent Form".
 - Appointments may only proceed if a satisfactory police check is carried out or the Executive Secretary confirms that a satisfactory police vet has been carried out in the previous five (5) years. However, where the person concerned has not lived continuously in the parish for the previous five (5) years, a police vet must be carried out.
 - The person in charge of the appointment process may for any good reason require a police vet even if one has been carried out in the previous five (5) years.
6. Where a position or licence is being renewed, a police vet need not be carried out if a satisfactory vet has been completed at the request of the Diocese in the previous five (5) years.
7. The Bishop has discretion to decide whether to require a police vet for those applying for a change in position that requires a Bishop's licence where the applicant has lived continuously in the Diocese since their last police vet, provided that no more than five (5) years have elapsed since the previous police vet.
8. Where applicants have not lived in the Diocese continuously since their last police vet, a police vet must be sought, except where the applicant has lived in an overseas jurisdiction/s where obtaining a police check is difficult or impossible, in which case, at the Bishop's discretion, the Diocese may seek alternative information about the character and conduct of the applicant.